DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 311 139 UD 027 065

AUTHOR	Jackson, Barbara L.; And Others
TITLE	Parents Make a Difference: An Evaluation of New York City's 1987-88 Parent Involvement Program. Policy Report.
INSTITUTION	Fordham Univ., Bronx, NY. Graduate School of Education.; Institute for Responsive Education, Boston, Mass.
SPONS AGENCY	Leon Lowenstein Foundation, New York, NY.
PUB DATE	Aug 88
NOTE	70p.; For a companion report on this program, see UD 027 064.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Family Programs; Grade 1; Grade 2; Grade 3; Kindergarten; *Leadership Training; Parent Attitudes; *Parent Participation; *Parent School Relationship; *Primary Education; Program Development; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Public Education; Urban Education
IDENTIFIERS	*New York (New York); *Parent Empowerment

ABSTRACT

This report is an evaluation of New York City's 1987-88 Parent Involvement Program (PIP). PIP included the following: (1) a Parent Orientation Program focusing on parents of children in grades K-3 in six community school districts; (2) a Citywide Parent Involvement Program; and (3) community school district, borough-wide, and local school Parent Involvement Programs. Significant effects were found in the following areas: (1) changed parent attitudes; (2) changed staff attitudes; (3) the development of a cadre of parent leaders; and (4) the development of models and materials. Recommendations are offered for the following: (1) the Chancellor and Board of Education; (2) community school districts; (3) schools; and (4) the managers of the program. (BJV)

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Parents Make a Difference

ED311139

An Evaluation of New York City's 1987-88 Parent Involvement Program

Policy Report

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Barbara L. Jackson, Don Davies,
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Parents Make a Difference

An Evaluation of New York City's 1987-1988 Parent Involvement Program

Policy Report

by

Barbara L. Jackson, Don Davies, Bruce S. Cooper,
and Jennifer A. Page

August 1988

Published by

Fordham University
Graduate School of Education
Lincoln Center
113 West 60th Street
New York, NY 10023

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Made possible by a grant from the Leon Lowenstein Foundation

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Executive Summary

This report is an evaluation of New York City's 1987-88 Parent Involvement Program (PIP). That program included a Parent Orientation Program focusing on parents of children in grades K-3 in six community school districts; a Citywide Parent Involvement Program; and community school district, borough-wide, and local school Parent Involvement Programs.

This evaluation, conducted by Fordham University Graduate School of Education and the Institute for Responsive Education found significant effects in four areas: changed parent attitudes, changed staff attitudes, the development of a cadre of parent leaders; and the development of models and materials.

The report closes with recommendations for: the Chancellor and Board of Education, community school districts, schools, and the managers of the program.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fordham University Graduate School of Education and the Institute for Responsive Education (IRE) are privileged to present this evaluation report to the New York City Board of Education and New York's parents, citizens, and educators who are working to promote excellence for all the city's children.

The evaluation study, of which this report and its companion volumes are the products, was funded by a grant from the Leon Lowenstein Foundation of New York City. We are especially grateful to John Van Gorder, Vice President of the foundation, for his support and encouragement.

Several staff members of the New York City Board of Education were extraordinarily generous with their time and made a special effort to provide the evaluation team with information and access. In particular we would like to thank Mariano Guzman, Executive Director, Division of Planning, Program Development, and External Relations; Doreen DeMartini, Deputy Director of the Office of Community School District Affairs; her associate, Aleida Calabrese; and Sam Matarazzo, Education Administrator, Office of Funded Programs. Patricia Beresford, Policy Analyst in the Office of the Comptroller, was also very helpful.

Perhaps our greatest debt of thanks is due the borough, high school, and community school district personnel, teachers, administrators, school staff, and parents of the New York Public Schools. These kind people went out of their way to make us feel welcome, show us their program, and explain in detail the successes and frustrations inherent in making parent participation work. In many ways, this evaluation report is more their work than ours.

Barbara L. Jackson, Professor of Education, Fordham University Graduate School of Education, served as Principal Investigator and provided leadership for this study. Dr. Jackson, her colleague, Bruce S. Cooper, Associate Professor of Education, Fordham University, Graduate School of Education, and Jennifer A. Page, Research Associate at the Institute for Responsive Education helped to formulate the policy conclusions and recommendations in this report. Don Davies, President of the Institute for Responsive Education, was the principal author of the conclusions and policy recommendations. Karen Byron, Michael McCourt, Nona Smith, and Richard Ulmer served ably as research assistants, conducting interviews and tabulating survey responses.

Drs. Jackson and Cooper would also like to thank Max Weiner, Dean of the Graduate School of Education, for his interest and support.

This project would not have been possible without our extraordinarily able support staff. At Fordham, Kathleen Marius, Tamara Masson, and Sr. Alice Rees provided secretarial support. At IRE, Sarah Sherman and Peggy Wiesner provided word processing and secretarial help. The editing of the series of publications growing out of this evaluation project was coordinated by Owen Heleen, IRE's Publications Director, aided by Associate Editors Jean H. Krasnow and Gian Lombardo.

Finally, the project team would like to thank the members of our Review Panel -- Toye Lee Brown, Angela Carrasquillo, Ellen Guiney, Beverly Hall, Sharon Lynn Kagan, Diana Lam, Marcella Maxwell, Roger Mitchell, Lynda Robinson, David Seeley, and Lorna Wilson -- who provided much sound advice.

I. INTRODUCTION

In September 1987, the Comptroller of the City of New York, acting to support the New York City Board of Education's initiative on parent involvement, made $800,000 available to the Board of Education for three categories of programs:

- a Parent Orientation Program focusing on the parents of children in grades K-3 in six community school districts

- a Citywide Parent Involvement Program designed to promote more active involvement of parents in the school life of their children.

- community school district/borough-wide, and local school Parent Involvement Programs.

Of the $800,000 total, $200,000 was reserved for the Parent Orientation Program (POP). The Board of Education developed and circulated a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit proposals for the citywide, district/borough-wide, and individual school programs. The purpose of these programs, according to the RFP document, was:

> to establish parental involvement programs which will promote opportunities for parents to interact directly with their children to improve the latter's propensity for success and to provide the resources necessary to

enhance home/school relationships.

This report is an evaluation of the Parent Involvement Program (PIP) implemented with these funds. The evaluation was conducted by Fordham University Graduate School of Education at Lincoln Center, New York City, (Dr. Barbara L. Jackson, Principal Investigator) in collaboration with the Institute for Responsive Education with offices in Boston, Massachusetts (Dr. Don Davies, President). Funds to finance the evaluation were provided by the Leon Lowenstein Foundation, John Van Gorder, Vice President.

Parent Involvement: A Definition

The definition of parent involvement in the public schools has varied over the years. Definitions range from responsibility of parents for "bake sales" and the performance of those duties determined appropriate by the principals and teachers to a demand for community control with parents and the community having responsibility for decisions, especially about personnel, curriculum, and budget that dominated the 1960s.

When one attempts to grasp an abstract concept like parent participation in education, one must divide the phenomenon into categories and attempt to provide descriptive labels for each category.

Parent participation in education can be described by the

following five-part typology:

- decision-making
- parents as educators
- advocacy
- school support
- parent education and support

For the purpose of this evaluation we define the term "decision-making" as sharing the process of making decisions about education. Two examples of decision-making are parent involvement in the federally-mandated individual education plan process for special education eligible children, and parent and citizen participation on school improvement councils.

Parents as educators refers to those activities, individual and collective, in school or at home, that contribute to efforts to help students learn. Such activities include coordinated home tutoring programs, homework helper projects, and parent volunteers assisting teachers in the classroom or preparing instructional materials.

Advocacy can be of two types: either individual case advocacy or class advocacy. Advocacy involves situations where there are conflicting values and interests. Advocacy may occur in one-on-one situations -- for example, a parent advocating a "better shake" for her child by meeting with a principal. Other

examples of advocacy include:

- case advocacy by organizations such as the Massachusetts Advocacy Center or the New York Advocates for Children in which the individual grievances of parents are handled through administrative and legal channels; and,

- class advocacy in which parents representing special interests, such as the parents of handicapped children or immigrant children, organize to advance their cause by influencing public opinion, or in the courts.

The best example of school support is the PTA and other parent-teacher organizations. The PTA, organized at the local, state, and national levels, is the oldest and by far the largest vehicle for parent involvement in the schools. PTAs typically work to support schools by raising money for local school activities, providing information and parent education, advocating increased funding, and building public awareness on issues that affect children, such as drug and alcohol abuse and child abuse.

Parent education and support programs include efforts to help parents deal with, say, the stress of parenting adolescents; parent support groups; GED or other education offerings.

While some conceptual models see participation as a hierarchical

system with decision-making at the top, recent work in this field has proposed a non-directional "complex of participation." Once parents are inside this participatory system, they can choose for themselves how they wish to participate.

As we shall see, parent participation in New York City's 1987-88 Parent Involvement Program encompassed all of these types of involvement. The report that follows attempts to draw conclusions about promising directions, and to make policy recommendations that might guide future practice.

The philosophy of the Parent Involvement Program of the New York City public schools was based on the Policy Statement adopted by the Board of Education which said in part:

> Research indicates that long-term educational success has its foundations in a strong relationship between home and school. Parents of students at all levels must be encouraged to participate in the entire range of instructional, educational planning, and policy-making opportunities.
>
> The Board of Education recognizes that parents are the primary educators of their children and the parental involvement is crucial to the effective education of the City's children. It is characterized by an active and continuing participation of individual parents in the education of their children, and by a partnership with the schools that their children attend.
>
> ...While individual schools and districts have highly successful parent involvement programs, there is a need to institutionalize similar programs city-wide.
>
> (The Board of Education Policy on Parental Involvement, adopted October 21, 1987)

Procedures for Proposals and Funding

Once the Board of Education received notification that monies had been reserved by the New York City Comptroller's Office for parent involvement programs, the responsibility for developing an RFP was assigned to the Division of Planning, Program Development and External Relations (Mariano Guzman, Executive Director). The responsibility for implementation rested with the Office of Community School District Affairs (Doreen DeMartini, Deputy Director).

At the same time that the RFP was being developed, the New York City Board of Education was in the process of drafting a policy on parental involvement which was adopted on October 21, 1987. This resolution provided the policy guidance necessary for the development of specific programs for parent involvement. The RFP was circulated in September 1987 requesting proposals by October 1. In the document, the target groups of parent involvement programs were defined as follows:

> All parents of school age youngsters throughout the city where the need is exhibited.
>
> The following risk indicators may be taken into consideration when developing a program: academic performance; children living in temporary/transient housing; medical and health needs.
>
> Special consideration will be given to proposals for underserved areas in the city with high concentrations of ethnic and/or racial minorities.

Proposals were requested in three categories: citywide organizations or agencies outside the school system for a citywide program; from districts and boroughs for five district/borough-wide programs; and from individual schools.

More than 90 proposals were received in all categories. Five were received from outside agencies. District/borough and individual school applicants were encouraged to collaborate with external agencies.

A review panel was engaged to review all of the proposals in these categories. The criteria for judging the proposals included several goals which programs should address. Projects were designed to:

- promote maximum success for students;
- enable parents to recognize the need to optimize the parent/child relationship and develop skills to help their own children;
- promote opportunities for parents and school personnel to join together in the educational process; and

- include public and private sector support and participation.

Capacity to implement the program as proposed and its replicability were primary considerations in judging the proposals.

A complete list of the funded projects follows, indicating the number of schools proposed in each category.

Parent Orientation Program

Community School District 2 Manhattan	(13 schools)
Community School District 5 Manhattan	(13 schools)
Community School District 9 Bronx	(9 schools)
Community School District 15 Brooklyn	(14 schools)
Community School District 17 Brooklyn	(16 schools)
Community School District 27 Queens	(18 schools)

Citywide Parent Involvement Program

Federation Employment and Guidance Service (FEGS) working with:

Community School District 4 Manhattan
Community School District 13 Brooklyn
Community School District 22 Brooklyn
Community School District 27 Brooklyn
South Bronx High School (Bronx)
Erasmus Hall High School (Brooklyn)
Jefferson High School (Brooklyn)
Far Rockaway High School (Queens)
Springfield Gardens High School (Queens)

District and Borough-Wide Programs

Community School District 3 (Manhattan)
Community School District 25 (Queens)
Citywide Special Education Program
Three Bronx High Schools
  Roosevelt High School (Bronx)
  Walton High School (Bronx)
  Taft High School (Bronx)

BASIS [Brooklyn and Staten Island Schools]

Concord High School
Curtis High School
McKee High School
New Dorp High School
Port Richmond High School
Staten Island Technical High School
Tottenville High School
Wagner High School

Individual School Programs

P.S. 155, Community School District 4 Manhattan
P.S. 98, Community School District 6 Manhattan
P.S. 30, Community School District 7 Bronx
I.S. 82, Community School District 9 Bronx
P.S. 9, Community School District 10 Bronx
P.S. 93, Community School District 13 Brooklyn
P.S. 92, Community School District 17 Brooklyn
I.S. 218, Community School District 19 Brooklyn
Eastern District High School (BASIS)

Procedures for Evaluation

In order to obtain information on which of the programs offered directions for future policies and programs, the Office of the Comptroller and the Board of Education proposed an evaluation by an outside agency. Based on a proposal submitted in March 1988, Fordham University Graduate School of Education, in collaboration with the Institute for Responsive Education (IRE) with offices in Boston, Massachusetts, was funded to conduct the evaluation.

The design for the evaluation had three components: a survey of all programs enhanced by interviews with key personnel at the city, district, and school levels; case studies of selected projects; and meetings with a review panel of experts. The

survey included two instruments: one designed for the school officials who were responsible for implementing the programs and the other for parents, in both English and Spanish, to obtain their impressions and suggestions. The case studies were selected to represent projects in each of the program categories. Documents were examined, visits made to the sites, and 175 interviews conducted with school personnel involved in the programs, parents, and others pertinent to each project. The case study reports and other materials are included in another volume of this study.

The Review Panel was composed of parents, a principal, and several others from the New York area who have had previous experience with parent involvement programs and community organizations and several members of the IRE Board of Directors who were selected in order to provide the evaluation project with a national perspective. The Review Panel met twice -- first to review the survey instrument and refine preliminary questions at the beginning of the study; and again in July to review the draft report and recommendations.

The research staff was composed of senior researchers with extensive experience in both research and school affairs, especially in working with parents and communities. They were assisted by research assistants with graduate training and experience as teachers in the public schools.

Using survey data, the case studies, interviews, and other sources of information, the evaluation addresses the following areas of critical importance:

1. Equity. Who was really reached? Who was missed? Were social class or language barriers overcome?

2. Effects on Children. Is there any evidence -- either hard or anecdotal -- about the impact on children, on their attitudes, achievement, or behavior?

3. Teachers and Other Key School Personnel. What did teachers really know about this project? How were they involved? How did they feel about it? Are any of them likely to have different attitudes toward parents or do things differently as a result of this project?

4. Principals. Was the principal a major actor in this project? How was the principal involved? Which of his or her actions or statements helped or hindered? Is the principal likely to do anything differently as a result of this project?

5. Policies. What are the implications of what

happened or did not happen for policy at the level of the school; the community school district; the high school district; central office; Board of Education; the city, state or federal government? Did policies at any level have any positive or negative effect on the implementation of the projects?

This evaluation project has produced three reports: the following Policy Report that summarizes the implications for policy directions and makes specific recommendations; a Technical Report that includes the data collected from all sources and the full text of the case studies; and a practical and useful report designed for use by school principals, teachers, and parents, focusing on the program elements that appear to work to promote successful parent involvement.

II. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Fordham/Institute for Responsive Education evaluation team concludes that the first year of PIP was a remarkable success and that the program should be continued and expanded. We talked to hundreds of parents, teachers, and administrators; visited dozens of schools and programs; attended conferences, meetings, and dinners; and rummaged through a half-ton of surveys, proposals, and reports. After sorting it all out, the program's successes stand out.

The City's investment of $800,000 and the quick response to this investment by schools and parents have touched more than 11,000 parents and 900 teachers, administrators, and other staff in 160 of the city's 1,000 public schools, spread over 15 of the 32 community school districts and four high school districts and one citywide district -- including 17 high schools and three special education schools. Enrollment in these schools totals approximately 140,000 children. PIP's cost is little more than $5.00 per child.

Some of the parents who were touched had already been involved in the schools, but many others had had little or no positive contact with the schools before. Some of the districts and schools had substantial parent programs underway before PIP; others used PIP to get started.

We estimate that the project sparked about 60,000 hours of "quality time," parent engagement with their children and their education, at home or in the school and about 30,000 hours of parent-teacher contact. It also produced hundreds of hours of parent volunteer time in the schools.

Much more important than the numbers, PIP's major achievement is that it has paved the way for a much more systematic and intensive response, beginning in the fall of 1988, to the Chancellor's call for involving parents in a school-by-school, district-by-district, citywide campaign for school improvement.

The Successes of PIP

The Chancellor has said that the success of this massive undertaking depends on opening up the schools and building successful collaborations with families and community agencies

Our evaluation shows that PIP has paved the way for this kind of collaboration in four important ways. It has changed parent attitudes, changed staff attitudes, led to the development of a cadre of parent leaders, and promoted the development of models and materials.

Parent Attitudes

Many of the parents who engaged in these activites gained more positive attitudes about the schools -- along with a lot of useful information about them. Many changed their views about schools and teachers, and about their own roles as teachers of their own children. Many gained self-confidence and learned things of value to them as adults and citizens.

Some said they were surprised and happy to be invited in and treated with respect. They were surprised to feel comfortable in a school setting that for many of them had unhappy memories. One high school parent from Staten Island commented, "Many parents who would never otherwise enter a school building, never meet other parents, never get to know anyone on the faculty, were given insights into what the world of 'high school' is all about."

A P.S. 100 (Queens) parent added, "It gave parents a good feeling to work with a teacher instead of just talking to her only at Open School Week. It was a different feeling working with a teacher who was teaching you to teach your child."

Many found that they enjoyed talking informally with teachers, finding out that they are three-dimensional humans who care about them and their children.

One parent said that the best thing that happened in the project was "the friendship and caring between parents, staff, and children. Another parent said, "It has shown the parents and children that their school cares what happens at school and at home." In many cases a foundation was laid for continuing parent-teacher talk, sharing, mutual help, and problem-solving.

Just as important, many also said they learned that they had a lot to teach their children and to offer to the school, that they were very important educators, too.

One elementary school parent remarked that, "It was a time of learning new and simple methods to help our children. School is only one avenue of learning -- home can be an extension of the process with all these workshops. I would gladly do it again."

A Curtis High School parent told us that, "The workshops have been enormously helpful to me in understanding the feelings of adolescents, their conflicts, and attitudes. Since I started going to the workshops, my relationship with my son has improved. With the insights I have gained, I hope to be able to help him improve his grades."

An elementary parent added: "The best thing that happened to me is that I learned I could teach my child not only by the book but by everyday experiences (cooking, taking a walk, reading, listening -- even a hug could teach a child about caring.)"

We know that talking about attitudes is very "soft" ("mushy" is the term that many evaluators would use), but from a hard policy point of view the opinions of each key constituency is vitally important if organizational change is to take place. These opinions can have a hard effect -- even if it is sometimes indirect -- on decisions about money, personnel, and program.

In addition to changed attitudes about schools, teachers, and their own roles as educators, many parents also report a new self-confidence, coming from participation in PIP, and say that they value highly learning about topics important to them as consumers of goods and services, tenants, homeowners, and citizens.

PIP seemed to help participants believe that "I am somebody."

Many parents remarked on this growth in self-confidence and spoke of learning in important, non-school related areas.

A District 4 parent said, "It empowered me to feel I can go quite a long way with these wonderful people."

An elementary parent told us, "I was able to learn to work with computers and also get something out of it for me."

Teacher Attitudes

The projects paved the way for increased teacher involvement with parents, even though in some projects teacher involvement was limited or sporadic. We saw and heard evidence of changed teacher attitudes. Some teachers reported that they were both surprised and pleased with how parents were interested in their children's education, in teachers' views about how to help children, and in helping their children both at home or in the school. They saw first-hand that most parents actually care a lot about their children and the school, that they can contribute to helping their child learn.

A teacher in charge of one of the individual school projects told the evaluation team, "We observed that parents are eager to learn and want to know more about their children's school and school work. We've also observed that parents are reaching out to unite and work cooperatively with teachers. They have also begun to become more involved in school activities and are volunteering their services in a constructive and educational way."

Some teachers discovered that they could teach other adults -- parents -- as well as children. They learned that they had something to offer to parents that parents valued.

Other teachers spoke with feeling about how they learned about the strengths and vitality of cultures other than their own, a

counterpoint to the deficit orientation that dominates media and many educational discussions about urban school problems and low-income, minority parents.

One P.S. 9 (District 10) teacher reflected this new outlook when she said, "We'd like to find ways to have parents become part of the team and to draw on their strengths."

However "soft" our findings on attitudes may be from a research point of view, more positive teacher attitudes pave the way for needed work to engage much larger numbers of teachers in school reform efforts which focus on parent involvement along with teacher empowerment, collaboration with the community, and changes in curriculum.

Parent Leaders

Although it was not explicitly part of its call for proposals, one of PIP's successes is that in some of the schools and districts a cadre of parent leaders has been developed. In at least 20 schools we note that a dormant or ineffective parent association has been revived and parent leaders and principals report that these associations are ready to go to work next year. (However, it is sometimes not very clear what their purposes and priorities should be).

One district's PIP project stressed "parent empowerment"

(District 4) and seems to have achieved some success in developing a cadre of "new breed" parent activists who are "assertive but not aggressive" and who are interested in working in a constructive, balanced partnership with the schools -- not knocking the schools and not being puppets for educators.

Chancellor Green said in his "100 Days Report": "My goal is to help parents form councils in every single public school in the City." The parent leaders trained through PIP and the emergent parent associations that resulted from PIP projects can help significantly in achieving this goal. This leadership cadre certainly paves the way for giving parents an increased role in decision-making.

Models and Materials

The most tangible way that PIP paves the way for future efforts in the school system is the fact that the program has produced a large number of models (approaches, plans, projects) and much printed and duplicated material that can be adapted and used in other schools in the city.

Along with a greatly enlarged stock of models and materials, PIP has resulted in a new supply of experience and expertise in the form of the school and district staff and parents who were involved in the project. PIP has produced, quite literally, 400 to 500 new experts on parent involvement in the schools. Some of

these new experts have an expanded vision of how parent involvement can help teachers and parents contribute to the broader goals of school improvement. They are a valuable resource for future work.

Other successes could be cited here, drawing on our case studies and survey results. But there are also countless "small successes" that occured in the more than 150 schools that were touched by PIP that were missed by our team's efforts.

The Downside of PIP

Along with the successes, there is a downside to PIP -- mistakes made, expectations not realized, and opportunities missed. Recounting some of these can be as useful as describing the successes to those who are responsible for the effort in future years. We mention five briefly.

Parent Involvement as an Add-On

We noted a tendency on the part of many administrators and teachers to talk about parent involvement as "nice" and "good to do" but related neither to the mainstream work of the schools nor to a broader strategy to improve the quality of life and results of the school.

A consequence of this "add-on" view is that there is not much

evidence that PIP was a part of either short- or long-term school improvement plans or that it was seen as connected to and supportive of other "outside" programs such as the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) or Project Giant Step. However, we found some creative ways in which funding and personnel from other externally-funded programs were used in combination with PIP -- Chapter 1, DPP (the city's drop-out prevention program), bilingual education (Title VII).

Low Numbers

Our positive view of how well the projects were able to involve so many parents and schools in a short period of time is tempered by the data that show in many projects only a very small number of potential participants were actually attracted to PIP activities.

In some projects, there seemed to be low expectations about the numbers that could be involved. These expectations were unhappily too often met. This was especially true for those parents that citywide PIP planners identified as high priorities -- parents characterized as having the lowest income, the most serious social problems, or being newly arrived immigrants or non-English speaking.

In some cases, planners deliberately focused on high-quality and intensive experiences for small numbers or for parent leaders.

The evaluators agree with many staff and parents we talked to who believe that they had made a good beginning, but had only scratched the surface.

Efforts at parent involvement, if they attract only a small percentage of all of New York's public school parents, are not likely to contribute much to the system's overall objective of substantial progress in terms of social and academic success for all the city's children.

If the parents the school staff considers the hardest to reach are not reached, the benefits of parent involvement will be denied to this large group and equity will not be served.

A Range of Traditional Approaches

The lack of success in attracting larger numbers of parents is connected to our next downside observation. In its first year PIP was characterized by heavy reliance on traditional methods for engaging parents -- workshops, open houses, parent conferences, parent associations. It is not surprising to find organizations sticking to their "standard operating procedures." In the case of PIP, there was little time for preparing proposals and gearing up for the work and, in the case of POP, the project components were mandated, so it may seem mean-spirited to fault administrators and project staff for lack of imagination and risk-taking.

Nonetheless, in light of the program's stated interest in reaching those parents seen as hard to reach, a wide range of non-traditional approaches was not found, except for some notable exceptions. Examples of these exceptions are providing parent education in homes, working through churches and other grassroots community organizations, using community media such as Spanish language or Black-oriented radio stations, and linking with other social service providers who are in contact with some of those the schools consider "missing."

Limited Teacher Involvement

We mentioned changes in teacher attitude as a major success, but on the downside, we note that few projects were able to involve classroom teachers beyond the small number who are members of project staff or who taught workshops. Although we found notable exceptions of teachers volunteering their weekend time for trips, retreats and the like, the mainstream faculty of the schools was apparently not often involved significantly in the project or its planning.

Neither did we discover much involvement of UFT chapters in PIP projects. The support and energy of this potential ally were not aggressively sought in most cases.

Involvement on the School's Terms

There was little evidence that parents were involved in the planning or proposal development phase of the projects. This may partly be explained by the very short time allowed for the preparation of proposals. Neither was there much parent involvement in the implementation of projects -- with the exception of a few that set up parent steering committees and assigned them meaningful functions.

The result of this lack of involvement in planning and management is that most of the projects were designed by educators. Parent involvement on the school's terms is not likely to be a good lesson in democratic leadership.

One parent identified this problem very clearly when she said, "I feel that although our principal and teachers worked very hard on this project, the parents in our school had minimal input. The school's interests were well presented but not the parents as much."

Budgetary and Management Problems

Many we talked to complained about the timing of the program: not enough lead time to respond to proposals, not enough notification, delays in the availability of funds, and bureaucratic snarls in budget procedures.

In many instances, funds were not made available until March. All or most of the project activities occurred in a four month period at the end of the school year -- March-June.

There were scattered complaints about program management and the lack of technical assistance.

What We Learned: Lessons from PIP

In our conversations, we learned many other things about the successes and the downside of the program's first year. We found many interesting approaches, promising models, and useful materials which should be of use to those who take the next steps to build on the successes of the first year.

We offer in abbreviated form some of the most important lessons we learned and a few examples from among many of the approaches and activities that were reported to be effective. We have organized these "lessons" around the evaluation questions from Section I of this report:

1. Forms of Involvement. What approaches to parent involvement were tried? What worked?

2. Equity. Who was really served? Were the efforts to reach parents equitable?

3. Teachers. How were teachers involved?

4. School leaders. What role do principals and other school leaders play?

5. Student Impact. What was the impact of greater parent involvement on the students?

6. Policies. What policies at school, district, and city levels had an effect on the program?

The Forms of Parent Involvement: What We Learned

All standard forms of parent involvement found in American urban school districts were represented in PIP's first year: parent education and support, parents as educators, school support, parent-teacher conferences, parent information, advocacy, and participation in planning and decision-making.

The heaviest emphasis was on parent education, parents as educators, and parent information, as these were strongly stressed in the program's RFP.

Across all these forms there were many varieties of activities, but traditional approaches predominated. Workshops and newsletters were the most common ways of providing parents with

information and were found in nearly every project.

From our review of the data, we have culled a few lessons that seem especially important along with some models worth looking at.

1. The needs and interests of different groups of parents are usually a better starting point than the school's agenda. A balance between the school's agenda and parent interests can be negotiated.

In some schools, the project began with free English as a Second Language classes, to provide both a service and a signal of interest to non-English speakers.

In three Bronx high schools, support groups were organized to help parents cope with adolescents and with the personal and family pressures related to parenting. The project showed parents that the school can be useful to them as a hub of community services.

2. The public school can be a center for adult education and social services, beyond the traditional definitions of parent education. Schools can offer information, provide support services, or make referrals to parents relevant to their lives as tenants, taxpayers, citizens, consumers of goods and services, and clients of health and social service agencies. Such

activities are useful in their own right and as ways to make a positive connection with parents on their own terms.

Several of the high schools of Staten Island organized support groups for parents. These focused on adult concerns not necessarily directly related to parenting such as divorce and coping with stress. These groups encouraged the participants to learn from each other as well as seek advice of the experts.

In the Bronx high schools project, tenants' rights and neighborhood services were two of several topics explored. At Roosevelt High School, a session on tenants' rights was arranged by the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition. At Taft, the coordinator assisted in getting parents to write letters to the local government protesting the closing of a local teen health center.

3. Good things can happen with high school parents. The widely-accepted assumption that parent involvement belongs only at the pre-school, kindergarten, elementary, and middle school levels was challenged by succesful PIP activities in over 10% of New York's high schools.

Through PIP, effective parent leadership training and parent support groups were offered by the three Bronx high schools. Help was obtained from the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition, a community-based organization.

Eight Staten Island high schools joined with a private organization (The Continuum) and the Federation of Parent Associations, to try to revive parent associations in each school. Some success was reported. Parent association presidents met monthly with the district superintendents and principals. Schools within the consortium also offered support groups, workshops, parent-student counseling sessions, and hot lines.

At Tottenville High School, Staten Island, joint student-parent-counselor sessions were held on a variable schedule, including in the evening. At least 1,200 parents were attracted to the joint counseling activities. Many parents gave the event high marks.

At Springfield Gardens High School, a variety of special outreach and orientation programs were designed for parents of ninth graders. Among the most successful was a Haitian cultural evening held at a Haitian Church and attended by about 90 parents. At this event, school administrators talked about the school, a Haitian dinner was served, and a Haitian parents' association (HAUP) made a presentation on Haitian culture. Another way of involving parents was a weekend leadership retreat, designed for some 50 ninth grade students, but also attended by 15 parents and 20 school staff.

4. <u>Workshops -- the most common PIP activity -- can be either</u>

exciting and valuable or boring and useless. The conditions that the evaluators identified as present in those workshops that received high ratings were: well-structured programs; scheduling matched to needs of a particular constituency (for example, mornings for mothers on public assistance, evenings for working mothers and fathers); varied methods, including films, role playing, and small group discussions; lots of hands-on activity, making things to take home, and requirements or rewards for attendance.

In P.S. 9, District 10's "School for Parents", interest and attendance remained high and the activity was given good ratings by both educators and parents. These workshops were characterized by a mix of parent and school concerns, clear structure, and by good use of outside speakers and resources. Preference for participation was given to parents with the lowest educational levels.

Workshops for parents of emotionally disturbed children in P.S. 94 (housed in P.S. 140M) stressed parent-teacher cooperation in behavior management, allowed time for parents to share experiences and learn from each other, and included weekend trips with children to show parents how to structure and manage fun and productive outings for their children.

5. Using community resources can help schools make parent involvement more effective. We were told about scores of

examples of community resources, including social service, health and law enforcement agencies, businesses, cultural institutions, ethnic organizations, and universities. These activities help to begin a new tradition for more open schools and collaboration, and often provide no-cost or low-cost services for children and families.

Staff in District 3 have prepared a district-wide Directory of Community Resources and Services, for use by all the schools.

The Polaroid Company provided a free workshop for the project in I.S. 218, District 19, on how to use the camera as a means of personal expression for parents and to help them develop their children's language skills. They provided free cameras to parents who came.

Community health, social, environmental, and educational agencies had booths at District 3's Cultural Fair, which attracted hundreds of parents. This provided a way to inform parents and other residents about available services.

The project in District 25 collaborated with many neighborhood ethnic groups. For example, a Korean cultural center prepared fliers and materials using a Korean typewriter which was not available to the school.

6. <u>Non-traditional means can be effective in getting information</u>

to parents about the schools, but they were not typically used. Sending fliers home with children is often ineffective. A few projects found novel ways to communicate, but not many used the community's own networks and media (neighborhood-based newspapers or Spanish-language radio, for example).

Nearly all projects reported preparing materials in more than one language, sometimes in five or six languages, depending on the demand and the school population.

Port Richmond High School on Staten Island set up a Heart Line, in which telephones were answered for 90 minutes each school day on a rotating basis by project staff, social workers, and counselors. Parents called anonymously if they wished to talk about their concerns. Both the staff and parents who talked to evaluators believe that the idea was useful in allowing parents to get help and information in a non-threatening way.

Similarly, Eastern District High School established a hot line as part of its Parent Center. The hot line was staffed by parents who were trained to make referrals and deal with issues of concern.

Another non-traditional method of getting information to parents, which met with great success, was demonstrated by Springfield Gardens High School which organized an evening dinner meeting in a Haitian church.

7. Schools and school districts can work with grassroots organizations to help them reach and provide information and services to parents who have little or no contact with the school. However, we found few traces of grassroots, community-based organizations involved in school affairs or serving as advocates for children or their families. This is a sharp contrast to New York in the 1960s and 1970s when there were many such groups. However, promoting advocacy was not a part of PIP's stated objectives.

The Northwest Bronx Community and Church Coalition was a helpful partner in the project developed by three Bronx high schools. They provided a bridge between the schools and parents who initially felt intimidated and also provided staff for support groups, training, and building leadership in the Parent Association.

Korean and Haitian community ethnic groups also collaborated with PIP projects in District 25 and at Springfield Gardens High School.

8. Parent involvement in such activities as parent education and support services, home tutoring, and helping in the school can give parents the confidence, motivation, and skills needed to participate in decision-making. There was little emphasis in the projects on decision-making as a form of parent involvement. Partnership and parent information were the main themes, not

school governance. Nonetheless, in some cases parents had a part in making decisions about the project itself, and a few administrators said they were interested in the idea of having parents more involved in planning and decision-making in the school. One district built its PIP around "parent empowerment."

Parents who become better informed about schools will be better decision-makers in situations where they have a choice among programs or schools for their children. Parent choice is an important form of decision-making.

In District 4, PIP supplemented already extensive efforts to train parent leaders. An effective district parent coordinator organized and led workshops and retreats which were aimed at parent empowerment and were highly rated by particpants and the evaluation team.

In I.S. 218, District 19, the principal formed a project steering committee and gave them substantial autonomy in determining workshop topics and planning for a revived Parent Association for 1988-89.

P.S. 92, District 17, conducted a parent survey and then formed a parent-teacher steering committee to oversee program implementation and the work of the committees.

9. <u>Many low-income parents can and did provide volunteer</u>

services to schools in the same way middle-class parents often do. Examples of such volunteering include:

- In P.S. 30 in District 7 in the Bronx a parent volunteer network grew to involve 70 parent volunteers working 2-3 days per week, organized by the Parent Association. "Parents were everywhere" working in classes, the office, the lunchroom, and helping with class trips.

- Other schools organized parent volunteers for specific tasks: Macombs Junior High School (J.H.S. 82 in District 9), invited parents to work on phone banks telephoning parents of absent children.

- P.S. 92, District 17, organized parent-student workshops in which parent volunteers read with, conversed with, listened to, and played with small groups of foreign-born children in order to enhance their language skills. At the same school, parents volunteered with teachers to work on committees. One created a video introduction to the school, using children as "tour guides;" it was to be made in several languages. Another parent teacher committee wrote a handbook, again in many languages, which included a directory of the school, a listing of community services, general educational information

including a map of the neighborhood, and information about how to help a child improve reading and speaking proficiency in English.

10. Parents are interested in learning about their children's curriculum and for many, doing so is a new experience. Information about what the school tries to teach in each grade is a prerequisite if parents are expected to help their children at school.

The Parent Orientation Program (POP) is an excellent example of a modest, low-cost but effective way to carry out this goal. It required that curriculum guides be developed at the district level for grades K-3; and that the guides be translated into the common languages of the district. Parents were introduced to the curriculum guides through school-sponsored workshops, and given ideas about how to follow up at home.

Though modest in its objective, the program was easy to implement, involved many schools, and served as a beginning in some schools which had not before oriented parents to the school and the curriculum. Parents who participated were generally appreciative and enthusiastic.

Equity: What We Have Learned

A central purpose of PIP was to extend the resources of the

school and community to those families most isolated because of poverty, race, social status, language, or other reasons. We know that parent involvement benefits both children and parents in a variety of ways, so that the goal of equity requires lowering barriers to involvement in as many ways as possible. We have culled the following lessons from a review of the information we have gathered.

1. Some parents in categories that schools consider hardest to reach were in fact reached through imaginative, diverse, and often non-traditional methods. But different methods are needed for different constituencies. For example, different approaches are needed for those who are illiterate in any language, for teenage mothers, for the homeless. Some PIP projects did not succeed in attracting many of those in the most isolated categories. Many of these parents can be reached best away from the school and through intermediaries whom they trust.

At Curtis High School, Staten Island, a vice principal gave talks in churches attended by new immigrant families who were reluctant to come to school.

Workshops for immigrant parents and their young children were organized in P.S. 98, District 6. Teachers helped demonstrate how children learn from play and from experience. Later, while the children were tended by caregivers, the parents and teachers talked about the parents' experience with their children.

Parents in J.H.S. 82, District 9 were organized in a phone bank to talk to other parents whose children were chronically absent or had left school altogether. The parents who were reached in this way seemed more responsive to other parents than they had been to the school officials. Special education schools regularly telephoned their parents with news about PIP activities and to discuss children's progress.

Tangible incentives were offered to attract participation in a number of schools, to entice those who might be reluctant participants: free cameras, subway fare, babysitting service, a home library for good attendance at workshops, diplomas.

2. <u>The most socially-isolated parents can be reached, but a great deal of time and extra effort is needed, along with non-traditional methodology</u>. The evaluators believe that the key factors are the attitudes of school staffs toward these groups -- toward races, ethnic groups, cultures, life styles, and languages different than their own.

PIP projects had neither the time nor the resources to begin to make much of a dent on the goal of extending school and parent involvement resources more equitably, or reaching those considered hardest to reach. Some important beginnings were made, but clearly much more is needed over a long period of time. Specifically required is staff development for teachers and administrators, revised teacher preparation programs, and many

opportunities for teachers to have positive experiences with individuals and groups that may now seem alien to them.

In several projects, social events and trips were used to bring some teachers and socially-isolated parents together. The principal of Springfield Gardens saw the need for such programs clearly, telling us, "Parents may be intimidated simply by coming into the building. Despite our professed commitment to working with parents, schools may be sending out some different 'vibes,' some unconscious messages that tell parents to stay away."

In several projects social events and trips were used to bring some teachers and socially-isolated parents together. Examples are the cultural fair in District 3 and sports nights in P.S. 93, District 13. The trips taken by parents, children, and teachers in the special education schools offered a different context for parents and teachers to meet and socialize.

The International Food Festival organized by P.S. 92, District 17, and dinners and banquets (both in restaurants and at schools) were enthusiastically attended by large numbers of parents in all schools which organized such end-of-the-year celebrations -- and many did.

Leadership:
What We Have Learned

PIP's program design made district and school-level

administrators the key actors in all aspects of planning and implementing projects. Their response at each of the system levels appears to have been a major factor in success or lack of it. There were few instances where staff development on the topic of parent involvement was provided to administrators.

We have drawn a few lessons from PIP's experience in this area.

1. In each of the projects that appeared most successful there was evidence of administrative leadership that was committed to the concepts embedded in PIP and willing to invest time and other resources to the effort. At the school level, this was often the principal or the project coordinator designated by the principal. At the district level, the superintendent and a parent program coordinator played the key role. In several cases where we were positively impressed with the results, there was a good mix of district and school level leadership and cooperation.

In both the Bronx and Staten Island high school districts, the district superintendent provided strong leadership for the individual high schools: meetings for planning, information, clear statements of commitment and priority for the PIP project, and technical assistance when needed.

In both Districts 3 and 4, the district superintendents led the way by assigning strong parent coordinators to work with PIP and creating the links between PIP and ongoing efforts to involve

parents. In both cases, both district-wide and school level results seem promising.

In many projects, the principal played a key role in ensuring the implementation of the plan. While leadership styles differed widely, two common elements characterized projects that seemed to work especially well. The principal made a clear delegation of authority, putting someone in charge, and giving them the time and resources necessary. The principal was committed to the goals of PIP.

While it is tempting to give examples of such delegation, we refrain from doing so, simply because there were so many examples of dedicated and competent staff at the school level who were given the authority, assumed leadership roles and worked diligently to assure the success of their project. The evaluators were impressed by their enthusiasm, their competence, and the backing they received from their principals -- all critical ingredients to ensuring that both "ownership" and leadership occured.

Some principals were particularly committed to this managment philosophy. One commented, "The more we share power, the more powerful we become."

2. <u>Chances for success in PIP projects were better if there were school staff available -- administrators, counselors, teachers,</u>

social workers, coordinators -- who matched the racial, ethnic, and language background of the main groups which the PIP project was trying to involve. Establishing trust and communication seems to be easier if parents who have little contact with the schools and are intimidated by them are approached by people they can readily identify with. The project at P.S. 155, District 4, a school which is in Spanish-speaking Harlem, assigned the work to two Hispanic teachers. They established an excellent rapport with their parents who said of them, "The instructors were very helpful and knowledgeable on the subjects. They had patience, understanding, were concerned and considerate of all the parents' feelings."

P.S. 9 in District 10 had a highly diversified staff by race, language-ability, and ethnicity, which became engaged in the project and was able to attract the involvement of a diversity of participants, including those who were deemed most socially isolated.

3. In several schools, the PIP project included a component on developing leadership or otherwise empowering the Parent Association or other parent groups to become activists in the community.

In District 4, parents participated in a nine-session training course on community organizing and a "Leadership Institute Retreat."

At P.S. 30 in District 7, the Parent Association received a two-week intensive course on leadership skills, and in Springfield Gardens High School, parents and students together participated in a Leadership Training weekend.

Involvement of Teachers: What We Have Learned

PIP projects varied widely in the varieties and extent of classroom teacher involvement. We have noted positive examples of teacher involvement and the positive effects on teacher attitudes. But in many PIP projects, teacher involvement was quite limited and the project didn't seem to have much effect on mainstream faculty, beyond project staff. We found little attention given to the need for teacher staff development about parent involvement or school-community relationships. A few lessons and models come clear.

1. Classroom teachers can be effective as specialists in and facilitators of parent involvement, if given time and support. Such teachers can be useful as trainers and providers of technical assistance for their colleagues in the same or other schools. Teacher involvement seems to give parent involvement programs credibility in the eyes of other teachers.

In the PIP project in P.S. 199, District 3 rated as successful by the evaluation team, teachers were in charge. In the Bronx high schools, classroom teachers were effective as parent

facilitators. In the POP schools, classroom teachers usually directed the program and were ofen very effective in that role.

In a special education school -- P.S. 231 at P.S. 180 -- two teachers successfully shared the position of community liaison, assisted by a paraprofessional. They were able to involve other teachers in weekend parent-child field trips and other project activities.

At Port Richmond High School, the PIP staff provided specific training for all staff on parent involvement. The principal and others spoke at the regular faculty conference and the project coordinator gave a talk for the guidance department. She also spoke at each department meeting about "Creating a Home-School Connection." Handouts were made available to all staff.

At P.S. 9 in District 10, 18 teachers were involved in the project in various ways. So much teacher participation aroused the curiosity and interest of teachers who were not initially involved. They asked their colleagues who did workshops, "What's it like to teach parents?" and "How can I get to do it next year?" Apparently, involvement in PIP was becoming a coveted role.

2. <u>Both parents and teachers can enjoy and benefit from talking and working with each other</u>, across differences of race, class, ethnicity, and role. Both traditional contact -- as in workshops

-- and informal contact as in parties, trips, and fairs can lead to more positive attitudes by teachers about parents and about other cultures.

3. Teachers can develop good materials which will encourage parents to become involved in their children's education at home. There are also good published materials available, but there are advantages to the locally-developed kind.

In P.S. 1, District 15, teachers developed home teaching materials, organized by grade level. Parents were aided through workshops to develop the skill and confidence to use material. In P.S. 155, District 4, the project found a unique way to reinforce parents' teaching at home: at the first sessions of a workshop, parents learned how to use new materials and teach skills through games and activities, and received materials to take home with them. A week later, in a follow-up sessions, they compared experiences using the materials and generalized about strategies for working with children.

Effects on Children: What We Have Learned

Our most important evaluation questions are those about PIP's impact on students. There is little solid evidence yet. A four-month parent involvement project can hardly be expected to demonstrate quick and tangible effects on students' learning and behavior.

But, in the long run those in charge of school policies and spending want to see what the connections are between involvement of parents and what students learn and do.

Fortunately, other researchers have found measurable effects of different kinds of parent involvement on student achievement. Different studies have discovered different kinds of connections. In some cses, the link is between what the parents do at home and what children learn -- parents acting as educators or their establishing conditions conducive to learning.

In other cases, the connections are between parents' self-esteem or expectations for themselves and their children and the children's self-esteem and higher expectations. When children see that teachers and schools value the contributions their parents make to schools, student self-esteem and expectations go up as well. The connections between self-esteem and expectations and academic achievement are well-documented.

We also know from other studies that teachers have a strong influence on children's learning and behavior. To the extent that PIP contributed to changed teacher attitudes about children's families and cultures, it is reasonable to infer a positive impact on children.

In the long run, we believe that it is both legitimate and essential to stress the contribution that new forms of parent,

family, and community involvement contribute to positive gains student achievement, attitudes, and behavior.

After reviewing PIP's experience in this area, it is worthwhile to highlight a few of the lessons the program can offer us.

1. Projects which bring together children and their parents along with teachers or other staff can be beneficial to all concerned.

Joint counseling (parent, student, and counselor meeting together) and joint schedule planning (counselor, student, and parent) was tried in PIP projects in the Staten Island projects and thought to be useful. Some parents reported that the three-way interaction was useful in understanding their child and the school's goals for him or her. Counselors also rated the joint approach as useful.

In P.S. 98, District 6 workshops gave new immigrant mothers a chance to observe and interact with their child in a educational setting. Discussions among parents and children without the children present were found useful for teaching about child development and learning and how mothers can relate more positively to their child.

Many other projects found that children's performances were a good magnet for attracting parents to school events.

2. Children learn to value schooling as they see their parents become involved in the school themselves.

Children saw their parents attend workshops, take ESL and other classes, participate in committee work, volunteer in the school, and attend special events.

One parent commented that there would be more children "in tune" with their education "because their parents showed they care." A high school parent commented, "I believe my son really knows how much we care about him. He sees us attend meetings [at school] each week."

3. Projects which teach parents how to help their children have a direct and positive impact on the children.

Parents in PIP learned how to use games, reading, and other home activities to provide skill development and reinformcement for their children.

The Parent Orientation Program (POP) systematically introduced parents to the curriculum and to ways the parents could help their children at home. District-wide and individual school projects often developed this opportunity far more comprehensively. The enthusiastic reception of the parents to learning these skills suggests that it will have an impact -- though often a limited one -- on the children's achievement.

4. Projects which provide new information to parents have a direct impact on children -- if the parents use the information.

PIP participants were exposed to a variety of new data about the availability of social services and about such topics as nutrition, health, drug abuse, behavior management, and parenting skills. Such programs had a special impact when they were provided in a supportive context and when there was follow-up, sharing, and discussion.

Policies: What We Have Learned

Policies at all levels of the system affected PIP projects, the evaluation team observed. A few of the lessons learned about policies and their effects include:

1. The mixed approach to funding and management -- working through districts, through a non-school private agency, through direct grants to schools -- was useful.

2. Certain conditions seem to be associated with project success. Policymakers at all levels can try to foster these conditions in future efforts. The conditions associated with good results are:

- clear commitment from above
- clear goals

- someone in charge with time and assistance
- timely availability of money
- lots of communication -- using diverse means -- among all affected
- diverse programming, matched to target constituencies
- a good balance between district leadership and assistance and school-level responsibility and flexibility.

3. <u>There are a number of key constituencies that should participate in each stage of a school project. These include parents, teachers, other school staff, building-level administrators, district-level administrators, community groups, and union representatives</u>. Some of these key constituencies were not involved at important project stages: proposal writing, planning, and implementing. Those most often missing were parents, classroom teachers, and UFT chapter presidents.

4. <u>Creating a climate for widespread parent involvement takes time</u>.

One of the most useful events in promoting this climate was a citywide conference on parent involvement sponsored by Federation Employment and Guidance Services (FEGS). This event was well-attended and allowed for the exchange of ideas and provided some citywide visibility for PIP.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

There are many steps that could be taken to build on the successes and apply the lessons of the first year of the PIP program. There is much that can and should be done by the Chancellor and his staff, the Board of Education; community school boards; district superintendents and their staffs; principals and other administrators; teachers and other staff; parents and parent associations; and community organizations and agencies.

In our reports on this evaluation, we have made scores of suggestions drawing on the data we have gathered and our impressions. But, time, energy, and money are always limited. All those concerned with improving the New York schools have multiple priorities. What are the most important things to consider by those who are committed to the concepts embodied in PIP?

For the Chancellor and the Board of Education

1. Working with the Office of the Comptroller, make a commitment that funding and administrative support for the Parent Involvement Program will continue on a steady basis for at least three additional years, with a substantial increase in the budget.

Increased funding can come from a variety of local, state, federal, and private sources, which can be pooled in order to supplement the Comptroller's fund and extend PIP and similar efforts to at least some schools in every community and high school district.

The key point is stability, so the leaders at district and school level -- and most importantly teachers and parents -- can be confident that what they begin can continue if it works.

2. Begin now to implement the Chancellor's plan for increased building level authority for education improvement and parent and teacher involvement in decision-making by providing incentives for community district school boards and high school districts to establish school improvement councils, beginning in September 1989, in at least 20% of the schools.

The councils would be primary means of assigning increased authority and accountability to the school. They will give shared decision-making power to teachers, parents, and the principal to find and plan ways to improve the quality of the school's life and the social and academic success of all the children. They would be responsible for incorporating varied approaches to parent and community involvement into the overall plans for school improvement and would receive an allocation of PIP funds specifically earmarked for parent programming.

Much work and negotiation will be required to develop a sound plan for school improvement councils acceptable to all of the major constituencies. The idea is consistent with developments in other states and cities and with the spirit of recommendations of teacher union and business leaders who advocate stimulating comprehensive reform by giving more authority to the school site.

3. Ask the new Office for Parent Involvement and Student Leadership to include in its work plan for 1988-89 two new tasks.

- Plan and put on a citywide PIP conference, focusing on the lessons learned and promising practices developed in the first year. Invite the co-sponsorship of the UFT, UPA, the administrators' union, and other city organizations and agencies concerned about school improvement and parent involvement. The conference should be held as early as possible in the 1988-89 school year in order to build on the momentum of PIP's first year.

- Organize a clearinghouse of information, models, and materials about parent involvement, incorporating as much as possible of the models and materials from PIP, along with good materials from across the country. Devise a plan for dissemination in conjunction with district superintendents and parent coordinators in district offices, parent associations, and other groups.

Both of these activities can contribute to seeding the system with new and imaginative ideas and to helping to develop a broader vision of how new ways of linking schools, families, and communities can contribute to educational reform.

4. Plan and conduct a comprehensive two-year marketing campaign to give citywide visibility to the importance of improving the schools and of parent and community roles.

This kind of public education effort could best be managed by a citywide organization, which draws on the New York's corporate and advertising expertise. Other cities -- notably Houston and Indianapolis -- have used a similar approach effectively to increase public support for the schools and parent involvement in the schools.

Major priority should be given to including non-mainstream media to try to reach those the schools find hard to reach, including new immigrants and non-English speaking people.

5. As a part of the next contract negotiations, the Board of Education should seek stronger and more specific provisions to incorporate responsibility to parents and for parent involvement into teacher, counselor, and administrator job requirements.

Responsibility for implementing effective parent communication and involvement should be a part of teachers', counselors', and

principals' regular scope of work, not an add-on. Time-on-contract should be provided for explicitly and should be monitored by school management at the appropriate levels. Staff development is vital to assure that teachers, counselors, and administrators have a fair chance to develop the skills, sensitivities, and attitudes needed to work with diverse constituencies.

For the Districts

1. District superintendents and community school boards should provide strong written policies in support of parent involvement and have full-time, well-qualified district office staff to be responsible for parent programming.

Written policies, where they are not now in place, would be a good first step -- if backed by the leadership's words and deeds and implemented by competent staff in the form of full-time parent coordinators. District parent coordinators can do much to help expand the range of activities and the overall vision which sees school-home-community relationships as a partnership.

2. A reasonable share of PIP money made available to districts -- supplemented by other district resources -- should be devoted to staff development activities for teachers and other school staff.

Positive attitudes, knowledge, and skills are necessary ingredients of an effective effort to engage parents and other community resources in a school's efforts to become more educationally effective. Emphasis should be given to helping teachers, counselors, and parents to develop mutual understanding and respect and to deal with tensions that may relate to class or cultural differences.

3. Superintendents and district school boards should require annual school improvement plans which incorporate ways that parents and the community will be involved and served.

School-based planning should be the responsibility of school improvement councils when they are created. Until they are, district leaders should encourage principals to assemble planning teams which include the chapter president and other teachers, parent association representatives, and staff involved in state and federal programs which operate in the schools. The plans for parent and community involvement and services should link projects and programs funded by various sources (e.g., Chapter 1, Title VII, bilingual; special education, drop-out prevention programs, PIP, business partnerships, etc.)

4. Every district should develop curriculum guides which they make available to parents and which are written in all of the major languages of the district.

If parents are to understand what the schools are trying to do, knowledge about curriculum is critical. With this knowledge, parents can be effective in helping their own children and in helping the schools in other ways.

Every district should have availabile curriculum guides at every grade level and in all major languages, and should provide opportunities for parents to discuss this material with teachers.

For the Schools

1. Teachers and parents should be involved working together from the beginning in both planning and implementing PIP and other parent involvement projects.

Early and continuous involvement creates a feeling of ownership on the part of the various key constituencies and taps a wider range of ideas.

2. Whenever possible, some of the contract time of one or more teachers should be allocated to providing leadership for parent involvement projects. Creative ways should be sought to inform and involve as many classroom teachers as possible in the project and its benefits.

Some teachers should become specialists in parent involvement and given time (or extra pay) to administer and conduct activities

and assist and train their colleagues. (A project to test and demonstrate this idea begins in September 1988 at P.S. 111, District 2, funded by the Leon Lowenstein Foundation). The participation of the UFT chapter should be actively encouraged.

3. In each school, the principal should assign a teacher or another staff person to be "in charge" of parent involvement in all of its various forms and give this person office support, a telephone, and a good place to work.

An important part of the mandate of the "person in charge" should be to work with others to develop a diverse menu of parent involvement and parent education and support activities and to pay special attention to finding ways to involve, in school and out, those parents who are socially-isolated or for other reasons have little or no positive contact with the school.

For the Citywide Managers of PIP

1. In 1988-89, set aside at least $100,000 of PIP funds to be allocated to neighborhood and district grassroots organizations and agencies to develop partnerships with schools to carry out parent involvement projects.

The availability of such funding will encourage grassroots groups to take the initiative to propose cooperative efforts with individual schools or groups of schools in their area. These

activities could be particularly effective in reaching socially-isolated parents. The funds should be administered through a simple RFP process with the proposal requiring written support of the principals to be involved. This plan should encourage improved school-community linkage.

2. Set aside funds in the 1988-89 allocation from the Comptroller's Office for an external evaluation of the second year of PIP.

Planning for an external evaluation of the second year of PIP should begin immediately in order that a contractor can be selected as early in the fall semester as possible. From 7 to 8% of the total allocation should be set aside for evaluation. The work in 1988-89 should include a careful examination of project budgets -- including how the funds were actually spent, and how PIP money was used as leverage in tapping other local, state, and private sources of funding.

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